

brought an understanding that their children could live in a world they had not known, a world where they could go to school, where they would not be defined by their religion but defined by who they are.

What an improvement that was and how grateful I am for the opportunity to have been there, not just as an Irish American but one who holds deeply our sense of freedom, our sense of democracy, and our sense that people do not get excluded because of their religious faith or their ethnic background or who their parents were but are included because they are human beings and because they have intrinsic worth.

RETIREMENT OF SENATOR RICHARD H. BRYAN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, with my dear friend from Nevada, Senator REID, on the floor, I want to talk about his colleague, also my friend, RICHARD BRYAN, who announced his plans to retire from the Senate. When he did, he said very simply and earnestly: It's time to come home.

I have known DICK and Bonnie BRYAN since they came here. I say DICK and Bonnie BRYAN because, like Marcelle and me, we think of them as one person because usually at events outside work, when you see one you see the other. In fact, that is what I cherish about both my colleagues from Nevada. I cherish their family life.

DICK said it is time to go home, and I am disappointed to learn we are going to lose a good humored and skillful colleague. As a Vermonter, I have to empathize with that deep-rooted impulse to go home. Everything DICK BRYAN has accomplished here paves the way for his return to a better Nevada, something all of us hope for because all of us will leave this body at one time or another.

Most of the time, the strength of our Nation stood resolutely with the welfare of Nevada in Senator BRYAN's mind. As Democratic cochair of the Senate National Guard Caucus, he blocked unwise and unjustifiable cuts in our citizen-soldier force. He brought us together so the Guard's voice could be heard, and his persistence has positioned this invaluable force to prepare for the new, continually emerging strategic landscape. Under his watch, Nellis Air Force Base became a national treasure, where our best, most skilled pilots mastered the art of war so that our country would never have to call on them for the real thing.

Senator BRYAN guaranteed the credibility of the institution of the Senate. I think of the Senate as being the conscience of the Nation, and we should be the guardians of it. Those who abused the public's trust and the powers of office, as Senators knew they would, received intense scrutiny when Senator BRYAN chaired the Ethics Committee in 1993 and 1994. None of us will forget his calm and dexterous handling of numerous sensitive investigations, some-

thing he could do because he was trusted by both Republicans and Democrats to do the right thing.

It had to be one of the most difficult times, requiring arduous work by any Senator, but never once did any of us hear Senator BRYAN complain about the difficult task, nor did he swerve from the steady course toward fairness and justice.

Indeed, in so many areas, RICHARD BRYAN made a difference whether in preserving the fragile desert environment or modernizing our commercial aviation system. The list is long, and if he stayed, he would have accomplished even more.

Senator BRYAN has made a choice that deserves only accolades and respect. He is going home, and Nevada is a fortunate State for it. It is also fortunate that he has left his partner, HARRY REID, here to carry on his battles. My wife Marcelle and I wish DICK and his wife Bonnie all the best, but I am going to miss some of our late night conversations and some of the humor and good will he has shown to all Senators.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I have just spoken to Senator DASCHLE. We have been communicating with our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol. I understand the Senate will shortly receive from the House the appropriations bill containing the final appropriations measures, and we hope to have some agreement on how to proceed shortly.

We will notify Senators and hotline that information. Once Senator DASCHLE arrives on the floor, hopefully we can move forward with that. In the meantime, there are just a couple of bits of information for our colleagues about the remainder of this session and the dates for activities we will have next year.

Of course, we hope to have the sine die adjournment resolution here shortly.

Senator DASCHLE and I jointly will have resolutions thanking the officers of the Senate, the staff of the Senate who do just a magnificent job on our behalf and on behalf of the American people quite often during long and weird hours. They really do a magnificent job, and we thank all of them for what they do.

Also, I see Senator REID is here, the assistant Democratic leader. He has really made a difference since he has been in his leadership position. He is

always calm and always diligent. He works on both sides of the aisle. I want to acknowledge that and thank him for all of his work. I will not overdo it now because I don't want to get him into trouble as we approach the last few minutes of the session.

I want to inform the Members of some important dates and events of interest concerning the beginning of the 107th Congress. I see Senator DASCHLE is here. He can communicate with the staff. I will run over these dates quickly, and then we can visit.

Of course, at 12 noon on Wednesday, January 3, the 107th Congress will convene with an immediate live quorum, to be followed by the swearing-in ceremonies for the newly elected Senators.

I want to emphasize that. That is on January 3. It is at 12 noon. There will be a live quorum, and all Senators are required by law, if they want to be sworn in and receive pay, to be here for that occasion.

On Saturday, January 6, the Senate will proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the official counting of the electoral college votes.

The Senate has passed a resolution that would move that to January 5, which would be a Friday, instead of Saturday, January 6. The House has not yet passed that resolution. But they have indicated that they may pass a resolution changing the date to Friday, January 5, for the counting of the electoral college votes. We will let all of our colleagues know exactly about that.

I believe we are required to proceed at 1 p.m. on either Friday, January 5, or, as it now stands, January 6. We will make that clear later on. Senators will be notified if there is a date change, if and when it is confirmed.

Of course, Inauguration of the 43rd President of the United States will occur at 12 noon on Saturday, January 20.

Furthermore, because a Senate committee is a continuing body, committees may begin working on committee nominations on January 5 or 6. Senator DASCHLE and I will be working on that. But there is the possibility, between January 3 and the Inauguration, that there could be some committee hearings on nominations. We will have to work through that. Of course, it will depend on the receipt of those nominations once the investigations have been completed. We will work through what committees and how that will be handled. Members who might be involved will be notified as early as possible, and hopefully that will be even before the end of the year.

Votes on confirmations may take place even on Saturday, January 20. I believe that has been the case in the past—if not January 20, certainly beginning on Monday, January 22. We will want to move forward very quickly on actually confirming the nominations. Senators will be further notified on January 3.